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ABSTRACT

As Western modernity has achieved global proportions, the race for development in non-Western countries feeds back and reinforces the compulsive attempt to "keep up," in a universal process of mimicry. The theories, models, and concepts derived from Western experiences are justifiably universalized. As part of the closely interconnected global system resulted from Western rationalistic logic, Taiwan cannot escape the Western influences in educational innovation. This paper first gives an historical analysis of education in Taiwan, and then discusses the current issues of education reform in Taiwan. It cites 12 education reform mandates set forth by the government in 1998: (1) revamping national education projects, K-12; (2) fostering pre-school and kindergarten education programs; (3) removing teacher education and in-service training programs; (4) promoting impeccable diversified vocational education; (5) pursuing excellence in higher education and its development; (6) advocating lifelong learning projects; (7) strengthening educational programs designed for the handicapped; (8) invigorating educational programs for the native Taiwanese; (9) expanding access to higher education; (10) creating a new system integrating teaching, guidance, and counseling; (11) increasing the educational budget for educational research; and (12) accelerating the promotion of family values/ethics through parental education. The paper discusses six trends and issues in education in Taiwan and concludes that tensions seem to be rising between internationalization and localization in education reform, and that the final ideal should lie in the harmonious integration of localization and internationalization. Contains 30 references. (BT)

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Dilemmas of Education Reform in Taiwan: Internationalization or Localization?

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education without broad, high-level and clear cultural consciousness, as Ed. Spranger (1920:181) argues, would remain a limited craft. The history of education must also be history of culture. The structure of education reflects the cultural consciousness and codes prevailing in the historical situation in which the education takes place. Education reform, as restructuration of education, is linked thus tightly to the cultural transformation.

The development of modern education system in western Europe since Enlightenment constitutes a chain of modernization. Modernization is characterized by Max Weber (1970:155) as a continuous process of rationalization, intellectualization, and above all a process of demystification of the world. The global diffusion of western rationality is thus conductive to the promotion of order and control and the achievement of enhanced interconnectedness of the world in a unified system. Modern education system, as product of the western modernization, has provided impetus that reinforced effective rational control of the world. The western model of rationalization is thus universalized as a highly institutionalized quasi world polity, which attempts to transcend particular cultural identities in favour of a universal identity (A. Benjamin, 1989:321)

As western modernity has achieved global proportions, the race for development in non-western countries feeds back and reinforces the compulsive attempt to "keep up", in a universal process of mimicry (S. Latouche, 1989:69). The theories, models, and concepts derived from western experiences are justifiably universalized. The establishment of modern education in many non-western countries was one chain of such a universal process of mimicry. Typical example was the education reform in Japan after Meiji Restoration of 1868. Under the new Meiji regime it was the Samurai

reformers and the enlightened bureaucracy who launched an intensive programme of modernization which drew on and adapted western principles to the Japanese context. Education reform had played a major role to furnish the new bureaucratic elite so vital to the modernizing process. As A. Green (1997:38-39) notes, Japan provided the first example of universal process of modernization through education drawing on western influences.

The process of modernization in the western world since the Enlightenment reached its zenith in the last few decades as the whole world was virtually constructed as an electronic, universal, timeless and technical global system. Western technocratic rationality has brought the supreme domination of the principles of cultural and social construction, such as rationality, order, efficiency and unity to such an extreme that postmodern decentralism, aesthetic, pluralism have been disseminated in response to modern logocentrism, Eurocentrism and totalitarianism. In the wake of postmodern criticism against the Eurocentric, hegemonic tendencies of modern science and technology, there arises also in many areas in the world a cultural consciousness of insurrection of subjugated knowledge against western domination in educational theory and practice. As V. Masemann (1990:1848-1857) argues, indigenous knowledge forms in the areas of world that are not "successfully" industrialized are once again seen valid forms of knowledge. Education reform project based on western-oriented rationalistic logic should not be imposed on the non-western world. Indigenous knowledges, values have been taken into serious account in implementing education reform in many parts of the world.

As part of the closely interconnected global system resulted from western rationalistic logic, Taiwan can not escape the western influences in the educational innovation. Theory of human capital and theory of modernization played vital role in Taiwan education policy implementation in 1960s, evidently influenced by western

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rationalistic logic of efficiency. However, in the wake of postmodern criticism against Eurocentric rationalism, Taiwan has cherished local or indigenous languages, values and forms of knowledge in the recent education reform. In search for her own cultural identity through education, Taiwan has been confronted with the problems caused not only by the global trends of internationalization, but also by her specific historical fate: under Japanese colonialism for 50 years and afterwards under the Martial Law control of Sino-centric hegemonic government from 1949 to 1987. It is therefore essential to give an historical analysis before proceeding to discuss the current issues of education reform in Taiwan.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Taiwan was ceded to Japan, as China (Ching Dynasty) was defeated by Japanese military invasion in 1895. The Japanese Government-General of Formosa in Taiwan deemed education the best and surest way to bring the people of the newly aquired territory under the Imperial control and to impart to them the national characteristic of the ruling race (Department of Educational Affairs of Government-General of Formosa, 1916:4).To meet the demand of so called " national characteristic education ", the Office for the Department of Educational Affairs was opened in the June, 1895. Japanese Language Schools with attached Normal School Departments were founded in different places in Taiwan for promoting Imperial colonial education. People were encouraged to change their names from Chinese into Japanese with substantial material and " honourable " rewards.

After the restoration of Taiwan to China in 1945, the urgent task of Taiwan authority was to exterminate the iniquitous effects of Japanese colonialism on Taiwan and to set up new national identity. In the National Meeting of Post-war Education

held in September 1945, " partriotization " (tsu kuo hwa) was proposed as main educational policy for the government of Taiwan. The so-called " patriotization " is actually " Chinization ". Under the " partriotization " policy, " education for nationalism " and " Chinese culture education " were specifically emphasized and persistently launched. Concrete measures included the prohibition of circulation of Japanese books and the alternation of Japanese appellation of districts, streets and schools etc. to get rid of the influence of Japanese culture. Towards the cultivation of the unified Chinese consciousness, strict strategies for unification of national language were adopted. The strategies included the edition of unified official school textbooks, prohibition of the use of Taiwanese dialects in schools, and limitation of performance of local and indigenous arts on mass communication network etc. In order to cultivate competent teacher for unified national language and national culture, " Phonetics of Chinese Language " and " Four Books (Four Chinese Ancient Classics)" were instituted as required courses in teacher education curriculum.

The Grand-China-oriented nationalism had been much more emphasized since the government of the Republic of China moved its site to Taiwan after the military defeat in 1949. The new Chinese School System revised in 1922 had been adopted also in Taiwan since Post-war educational reconstruction.

Paradoxically enough, nationalism based on the Chinese culture and economic rationalism based on western efficiency logic had been combined in education policy making since 1949. On the one hand, the eminent danger of military invasion and internal subversion from the Communist China made it urgent need to form a solid spiritual national defence forces, of which teacher education was thought to be one of the most important. Teacher training institutions were established exclusively by government and limited to public institutions. Cultural nationalism with strong China-orientation was cherished in the education. On the other hand, western

efficiency logic of capitalism was also urgently needed in Taiwan for developing industry and foreign trade in order to survive herself in the highly competitive international jungle. Theory of human capital, theory of modernization and competency-based education had been specifically underscored in the education policy since 1960s with a view to promoting economic development through effective educational implementation.

Since 1980s high-tech industries had been developing at very rapid pace. The rapid economic growth and political stability in recent years has given the government the confidence that martial law was no longer necessary to keep national security and it was lifted on July 15, 1987. Democratization, pluralism and liberalization have hence been sought for in every socio-cultural sphere. Reform in education has been crying out for meeting the demand of the changing social reality. The government in Taiwan on its part has also been championing education reform with great effort.

III. RECENT EDUCATION REFORM

Education reform has been becoming much more enormous social, political and moral concern in such a turning age of technological, economical and socio-cultural changes bringing challenges to the operation of education. The world wide general pessimistic tone of inability of education to cope with the emerging social problems has pushed many countries to take measures of educational reform. The focus of reform efforts all around the world seems to have been changing from restructuring public education in 1980s to raising national educational standards with a view to strengthening international competitiveness in 1990s (cf. Shen-Keng Yang, 1998; Shen-Keng Yang, 2000; E. H. Berman, 1996).

Not going against the worldwide current, Taiwan has also embarked on a

continuous programme of educational reform. In 1983 a Research Group for the Reform of School System (學制改革研究小組) was built by Ministry of Education to investigate the feasible strategies for reorganizing school system. However, only very few of the proposals by the Research Group have been put into practice. Four years latter, the Martial Law was lifted. Democratization, pluralism and liberalization have been sought for in every socio-cultural sphere. Reform in education has been crying out for meeting the demand of the changing social reality. Since the early 1990s a popular sense of educational crisis has been resulting in the feeling that the system must undertake major changes. It was under these circumstances calling for drastic action that led to the premier's approval for the establishment of a cabinet-level ad hoc Council on Education Reform (教育改革審議委員會) in September 1994. The thirty-one Council Members, under the chairmanship of Professor Lee Yuan-Tze, Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, were assigned the task of studying the feasible strategies for restructuring educational system to meet the new demand of the coming century. After two-year study, the Council published the General Consultation Report for Education Reform (教育改革總諮議報告書) on December 2, 1996.(Council on Education Reform, 1996). To implement the reform proposals, the Executive Yuan set up an inter-ministrial Commission for Promoting Education Reform (教育改革推動委員會) in January, 1997, under the coordination of former Vice-premier Liu Chao-Hsuan. Furthermore, in his Inaugural Address President Chen Shui-Bian reaffirmed the determination of New Government to launch on overall education reform in the Republic of China on Taiwan: "We will seek a consensus among the ruling and opposite parties, academics and public to carry on with educational reforms and build a healthy, proactive, lively and innovative education system, which will allow Taiwan to cultivate first-class, outstanding talents amid the fierce international competition. We let Taiwan move gradually toward a "learning organization" and a "

knowledge-based society". We will also encourage people to take up life-long learning to fully develop their potential."

In response to the said reform proposals and reform ideas, the central government and many local governments in Taiwan on their part also took many initiatives and set up co-coordinated effort in planning and promoting reforms. Several laws, decrees and working guidelines have been enacted or revised as part of the overall educational innovation.

FROM IDEAS TO MANDATES

The focus of reform concern of the Research Group for the Reform of School System in 1983 was, as indicated earlier in this paper, the reorganization of educational system. However, the new social demands caused by the technological, economic and cultural changes during the turn of the new millennium make it imperative to improve extensively and penetratively the whole quality of education in Taiwan. Thus the mottos interwoven in the General Consultation Report for education Reform are deregulating governmental control over education and exempting education from unnecessary constraints, safeguiding the children's and students' learning rights, protecting the parents' choice right of education patterns and paths for their immature children and respect for the teachers' professional autonomy.

Under the guideline of these mottos, the Council on Education Reform set up the following education reform goals:

1.Modernizing educational processes and ends;

2.Meeting individual as well as social needs;

3.Establishing life-long learning society;

4.Promoting extensive and penetrative innovation of educational system.

To actualize these goals, totally thirty-two recommendations including reforming

elementary, secondary and higher education, improving and diversifying channels of admission to higher level schools and universities and facilitating life-long learning were suggested to bring about fundamental changes of education in Taiwan.

To implement the reform proposals, an inter-ministrial Commission for Promoting Education Reform was set up and assigned the task of monitoring the progress of actualizing the reform proposals. On April 4, 1998, the Commission approved the proposed Twelve Education Reform Mandates (教育改革行動方案), allocating a special budget of NT$ 150,000,000,000 (equivalent to US$ 5 billions) for the unprecedented mission to be accomplished in five years. The proposal was then finalized by the Executive Yuan and Legislative Yuan on May 14, 1998, leaving greater leverage for unprecedented education changes in Taiwan. These twelve education reform mandates run as follows:

1. Revamping National Education Projects, K-12.
2. Fostering Pre-school and Kindergarten Education Programs.
3. Renovating Teacher Education and In-service Training Programs.
4. Promoting Impeccable Diversified Vocational Education.
5. Pursuing Excellence in Higher Education and Its Development.
6. Advocating Lifelong Learning Projects.
7. Strengthening Educational Programs Designed for the Handicapped.
8. Invigorating Educational Programs for the Native Taiwanese (Aboriginals).
9. Expanding Access to Colleges and Universities.
10. Creating a New System Integrating Teaching, Guidance, and Counseling.
11. Increasing the Educational Budget for the Enhancement of Educational Research.
12. Accelerating the Promotion of Family Value/Ethics through Parental Education.

FROM MANDATES TO LEGISLATION

Since the Executive Yuan has set time limit for implementing the Reform Mandates within 5 years, the Ministry of Education and the related Educational Authorities in Taiwan took immediately the coordinated initiatives to review and revise the existing laws and to enact the new laws. Among these pieces of legislation the revised University Law, the Teacher Education Act and the Law of Teacher Union and Teacher Selection are thought to be particularly significant in restructuring education system in Taiwan. Moreover, the promulgation of the Education Basic Law has laid the cornerstone of fundamental educational innovation for the coming millennium.

First of all, so far as the revision of University Law is concerned, it launched an accelerated process of educational liberalization and deregulation. The new University Law has reduced the centralized power of the Ministry of Education over universities and colleges, and consequently the campus operations have become more flexible. New system of selection and/or election of academic chief(department head, dean and university president) has replaced the old system, which deans and department heads are used to be appointed by University president, and university president by Ministry of Education. To assure more financial autonomy of public universities, a " University Development Fund System" was established to provide more flexibility to public universities in using their revenue from students' tuition fees, college-enterprise cooperation and research projects. However, where is freedom, there is responsibility. Under this system, the public universities have to assume the full responsibility for some 20% of their annual operation. Each university will take the consequences when it comes to deficit and will thus have to raise fund for university operation. The way to acquire educational resources will become a very serious issue for most of the

public universities.

As for the free market mechanism in restructuring teacher education, the new Teacher Education Act plays a crucial role in the supply and demand of qualified teachers. According to the new Act, access to institute teachers education program is open to all the qualified universities, in contrast to the previous planned teacher education, that is, only national universities are accredited exclusively to set up teacher training program. The Administrative Guideline for Accreditation of Teacher Education Program encourages the universities to build teacher training programmes full of their own distinct feathers. In order to win in the highly competitive market of teacher's employment, each university will establish specifically characteristic teacher education program to attract more able teacher students.

Moreover, with the enactment of Teacher Union and Selection Law, not only is teacher's professional quality more guaranteed, but also is his professional right protected from political and ideological interferences. According to the law, the right to recruit new teachers is authorized to the Selection and Screening Committee of Teachers. Thus the possible bias resulted from arbitrary preference of school headmaster or principal to employ unsuitable teacher can be avoided. When teachers' professional rights are encroached upon, they can appeal to local and then to central Committee of Appeal and Arbitration for Teachers asking for redress.

Finally, the most important piece of educational legislation in recent years in Taiwan is the Education Basic Law. Fundamental and drastic changes in education will be expected in the near future after the enactment of the Law. The Law stipulates that all the people are the subject of educational right (Article 2). People's right to accept education is thus fully protected and students' subjectivity and individuality are properly respected. With the Law, the government can extend the period for compulsory education from the current nine years to 12 years (Article 11). The Law

also provides that the central government must delegate more authority to local administrations in handling education, thus allowing a more diversified and localized curriculum for students (Article 9). In addition, underprivileged students, including those who live in remote areas, will be given special treatment to ensure their equal educational opportunities (Article 4). The Law also requires educational authorities to remain neutral when giving instruction on the subjects of politics and religion and make sure they don't influence education. Educational authorities are not allowed to force students, teachers or staff members to participate in political and religious activities, or to promote political or religious groups (Article 6).

The Education Basic Law is paving the way for the implementation of numerous education innovations in Taiwan.

FROM LEGISLATION TO CONCRETE MEASURES

Before and after the promulgation of the Education Basic Law on June 23, 1999, the Ministry of Education and the related educational authorities in Taiwan have made many efforts to review existing educational laws and administrative decrees. After careful study, many Education Reform Initiatives have announced. Among the reform programs, the following three are thought to be most important in bringing about radical changes for betterment of educational quality:

1. Improvement of System of Admission to University and to Senior High School

Taiwan like many Asian countries, Japan, Korea, e.g., has been prevailed by a phenomenon of so-called " school promotionism ". In order to climb up the school ladder to reach university and college, once youngsters are in high school they have to spend long hours in coaching classes which prepared them for entrance examination, held annually. In a period of three years, they have to pass two highly competitive

entrance examinations, one to enter academic type senior high schools and the other to enter colleges and universities.

In order to reduce students' working load and parents' heavy burden, a new System of Multiple Channels for Admission will be enforced from academic year 2002. Three main channels of admission are instituted: The first one is called " selection through recommendation, in which a university selects candidates among students recommended by high schools according to the criteria prescribed by its departments. The second selection mechanism is through a two-stage process: the admission is dependent on the results of two examinations. The first examination administered by College Entrance Examination Center includes 5 basic high school teaching subjects. The second examination includes the subjects assigned by the university according to its own need and academic standard. The third channel of admission is through only one examination, of which only the four or five assigned teaching subjects are tested.

The entrance to senior high school is also undergoing a drastic change. The joint entrance examination of senior high school will be completely abolished in 2001. The result of Basic Competency Test of Junior High School will become the main criteria for senior high school for selecting students and/or approving the admission--application.

2. Scheme of Basic Competency Test for Junior High School Students

In correspondence to the reform of senior high school entrance admission, a Scheme of Basic Competency Test for Junior High School Students has been envisaged to be enforced in 2000. In contrast to the achievement test of previous joint entrance examination, the Basic Competency Test aims to evaluate the students' fundamental knowledges and skills. The students can take one or multiple times test.

They can choose the best one result of the tests to apply for the admission to the senior high schools. The test contents are confined to the subject categories as defined by Nine-year Integrated Curricula.

3.Nine-year Integrated Curricula

Among reform initiatives, the Nine-year Integrated Curricula starting 2001 is the most influential education innovation, which will bring about not only structural, but also substantial educational changes. The new curricula will significantly simplify in the treatment of the great diversity of subjects in elementary and junior high schools (1^{st} to 9^{th} grades). Previously the elementary and junior high school subjects are taught separately and are not linked with each other in functions. With the new curricula the teaching subjects (from grade 1 to grade 9) will be integrated into the following categories:

1." Languages and Literature" will include the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing- the basic abilities of efficient communication.
2." Physical and Mental Health" will include physical and mental development, and athletic skills.
3." Social Sciences" will cover motifs such as history and culture, geographic environment, social system and civic responsibilities.
4." Arts and Humanities" will be divided into music, fine arts and performing arts.
5." Mathematics" will focus on solving process and inferring abilities.
6." Nature and Sciences" will cover themes such as resources and energy, natural life and environment.
7." Multiple Activities" will contain group programs and activities such as

counseling and resource utilization.

In addition, schools are authorized the right to design their own curricula with local feathers, even with schools' unique characteristics. Therefore all the schools will have to set up curriculum-developing committees to design their own teaching materials and activities.

To enforce the new reform programs, the business of the greatest urgency at present is to affirm the nation's education resources and preparation. All the teachers have to participate urgently in the in-service training programs in order to adjust their teaching methods and teaching attitudes so as to meet the change of curricula.

IV. TRENDS AND ISSUES

Based on the above discussions, the following trends of education reform in Taiwan can be observed:

1. The introduction of market mechanism into educational process has forced governments to reduce their control over education.
2. Through pursuing social goals and international competitiveness, education in Taiwan has turned to individual dignity, value and learning needs.
3. Children's educational right, parents' right to choose suitable education types for their children and teachers' professional autonomy are duly respected and protected.
4. Multiple channels of admission to senior high schools and universities are designed to secure substantial educational equality and social justice.
5. Flexible integrated curriculum is designed to meet individual, social needs and to cultivate competent citizens with international vision.

6.Learning society is under the process of planning to secure continuous national development.

However, serious educational problems are also caused by the imbalance between competition and social justice, between power of private sector, parents, school and government. Most of the teachers are in need of in-service training to adapt their teaching methods and attitudes so as to meet the challenges of educational reform.

Furthermore, ideology conflicts seem inevitably to be found behind the afore-mentioned education reform measures in Taiwan. In order to form her own national and cultural identity, Taiwan tries every possible to get ride of Japanese colonial influence and escape from China-oriented nationalism. An increase of the teaching material of local history and geography as well as local arts is evidently seen in the recent curriculum reform at very school level. In the wake of pluralism and mutual respect of all the ethnic groups in Taiwan, varieties of Taiwanese dialects have become the required courses in the primary school in contrast to their prohibition in favour of the monopoly of Mandarin in school curriculum under the Martial Law control before 1987. All in all, local or indigenous forms of knowledge and value are cherished in the recent education reform.

Localization is not, however, the only way of education reform leading to form self-identity and national posperity for Taiwan. The world today, as the Joint Statement of the Second APEC Education Ministerial Meeting (APEC, 2000) declares," is now truly the global village it was once envisaged to be. ". The advancement of science and technology, has make all parts of the world much more interconnected and mutual interdependent. Global economic and social trends will have impacts on the educational development. Internationalization of education is thus necessary to open the door for better mutual understanding and appreciation of

rich diversities. It is in this spirit of the age that makes Taiwan take internationalization as one of the major mottos in the education reform. The measures for promoting educational internationalization includes mainly training teachers for English courses in primary schools, instituting systems of transfer of credits between universities, creating inter-university and international programs, enhancing budget for inviting foreign visiting scholars and assisting students to study abroad, etc. All the measures aim to help students acquire new knowledge about other cultures and countries.

Tensions between internationalization and localization seem to be arising in education reform. However, internationalization should not be confined to the understanding of other cultures and interchanges of the values and knowledges in international arena. Internationalization, as an overarching objective of education reform, is defined by R. M. Paige and J. A. Mestenhauser (1999: 504) as " a complex, multidimensional learning process that includes the integrative, intercultural, interdisciplinary, comparative, transfer of knowledge-technology, contextual and global dimensions of knowledge construction. It is an international mind-set leading to further construction of knowledge and value attitude. Only this perspective can resolve the ideology conflicts in Taiwan education reform. Localization of education will make Taiwanese people aware better their own cultural roots so as to give them points of reference that enable them to determine their place in the world. This clear cultural self-identity is the starting point of learning process towards understanding and respect for the cultures and spiritual value of various civilizations. The final ideal of education reform in Taiwan should therefore lie in the harmonious integration of localization and internationalization that leads to help people have a better self understanding and understanding of the world.

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